Connecting Social and Emotional Learning with Mental Health National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning at the University of Illinois at Chicago. January 2008.

**Summary:**

The article starts with a definition developed in 1999 by the surgeon general defining mental health as “successful functioning that results in productive activities fulfilling relationships with others and the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity”. This definition has contributed to the heightened awareness of mental health in promoting success in school as well as identifying and treating emotional and behavior problems.

Positive mental health prevention is cost effective for students especially where multiple factors are addressed. This emphasis on mental health especially in the last decade has led to an emphasis on the roles schools can plan on promoting positive mental health for all students especially those who are at risk or are already demonstrating social or emotional problems.

Schools must be partners with the mental health organizations because mental health is essential to learning and school must partner with the experts in the field of mental health. It makes sense that schools would be the organization to facilitate mental health services since they see a large number of this population. There have been a number of initiatives in recent years to address these mental health services. The goals of these initiatives are to meet the emotional and mental needs of students prior to developing significant emotional needs and to allocate resources and support for children and adolescents with mental health needs. When schools address mental health issues in a systemic and positive way there are a number of positive effects (less classroom behavior disruptions, greater student engagement, fewer special education placements, etc.).

Some of the things that schools should do as an initial step is to:

* Weave resources into a cohesive and integrated continuum of interventions that promote health development and prevent problems
* Allow for early intervention as soon as problems arise
* Provide assistance to those with chronic and severe problems

**Reflection:**

This article will be a nice resource for schools as they begin to think about creating a system of supports for emotional and mental health issues in their building. I choose this article because I was looking for an article for a staff to read as they begin to think about implementing a system of supports for behavior in their district. Even though this article did not provide specific strategies which is what sometimes districts want to jump to, it did provide a nice overall that would create a common understanding of what the vision should be when creating positive supports for all students.

I especially liked how the article continues to support the use of outside resources. Too often I have seen schools reluctant to use the resources of the community that are available for kids. If all stakeholders are after the same results than it only makes sense to work together. Schools cannot focus only on academics as the mental and emotional health of students directly affects the achievement of the students.